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THE GULL

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BUGS FROM THE NEAR AND FAR SIDE The Wonders of Insects

What could be a more appropriate topic for Valentine's Day than a program about the bees and the birds (we'd better give the insects top billing)? Join Ray Peterson of Audubon Canyon Ranch at our next meeting, Thursday, Feb. 14, 1991 in Berkeley. Peterson describes his slide show as an "entomological soft shoe," where his goal will be to "get people to appreciate the role of insects in nature, including the important role for birds. Can you imagine birds without insects?" was Peterson's response to me when I asked him how I could relate his slide show to a bird-oriented group. Peterson will also explore the development of flight, which is common to both insects and birds, and talk about the birds that depend upon insects.

Ray Peterson describes himself as an entomologist and a generalist, who has taught all sorts of natural history classes from field ecology to, of course, insect classes. Prior to beginning his current position of Resident Biologist for Audubon Canyon Ranch eight years ago, he taught at Sonoma State and San Francisco State Universities.

Remember, the program begins at 7:30 p.m., Feb. 14 at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda. And make sure to bring your honey.

JOELLE BUFFA
Program Chairman

— EDITORIAL —

The GULL applauds the San Mateo Board of Supervisors for their courage, and the leadership of the Peninsula Humane Society for their efforts in behalf of dogs and cats. Unwanted offspring of pets that run loose have long imposed a problem. The employees of our local animal control organizations most often are animal lovers whose work of rescue and care is rewarding, but who, as our representatives, are required to slaughter, by the hundreds, puppies, kittens and abandoned dogs and cats for whom no homes can be found. San Mateo has acted responsibly to limit pet reproduction.

We hope that San Mateo can take the next step, that of requiring the licensing of cats. We hope that San Francisco and Alameda Counties can follow this humane and reasonable precedent and its' corollary. It would be ecologically sound, fiscally responsible, and humane. Write to your local supervisor. We may be on a roll.

D.S.



FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, Feb. 9—Lake Merced, San Francisco.

Sunday, Feb. 10—Lake Merritt, Oakland.

For details on the above, see *The GULL* for January.

Wednesday, Feb. 13—Mini-trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park. (Note change. Due to substantial increase in parking fees at Lafayette Reservoir—that trip has been cancelled.) Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot by the Visitor's Center at end of the road.

To get to Coyote Hills Regional Park from East Bay take I-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Go west and take Newark Blvd./Ardenwood exit. Continue on Ardenwood three quarters of a mile to Commerce Dr. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 south beyond Redwood City, cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; go north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. We will be looking for three species of teal and other wintering waterfowl. Bring Lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday/Sunday, March 9/10—Honey Lake. Call for detailed directions. Trip will be limited to 20 participants. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is also available. Be sure to bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one. We should see Sage Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other birds of the Eastern Sierra. Leader: Bob Hirt (408-446-4478). (✓)

Sunday, March 10—Tennessee Cove. This will be a two mile walk to Tennessee Cove, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to look for land birds (including White-throated Swifts), and shorebirds. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 north to Marin Co. and exit on Hwy. 1 toward Mill Valley and Stinson Beach. In about one quarter mile turn left onto Tennessee Valley Rd. Meet at the end of the road at 9 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020, work) (✓)

Wednesday, March 13—Mini-trip to Mitchell Canyon. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 24 through the Caldecott Tunnel. At Walnut Creek take Ygnacio Valley Rd. Go approximately 8 miles, then turn right onto Clayton Rd. Go one mile and make a right onto Mitchell Canyon Rd. and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road. This is a delightful area with easy streamside walking and many songbirds. Wear shoes suitable for walking in mud, and bring your lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Plan Ahead:

Saturday, March 16—San Francisco Bird Blitz. Leader: Alan Hopkins (664-0983). See next issue of *The GULL* for details.

Trips marked with a \$ go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

DECEMBER OBSERVATIONS

“Cold” replaced “dry” as the hot topic of conversation during December as major misery descended on California as well as on most of the western U.S. Nearly two weeks of record cold temperatures affected and rearranged plant and animal populations throughout the area and made one long to be a PG&E stockholder. Birds, in order to maintain their body temperature, have an extremely high metabolic rate which means that they burn calories so quickly that they must eat frequently if not constantly—starvation in some smaller species like hummingbirds can occur in a matter of hours. During a period of prolonged cold, when the spectres of freezing and starvation both loom, as the need for food increases often the food supply decreases. Our generally moderate climate allows for a large variety of wintering birds in part because of our varied food supply. Wintering birds in the east vary their diets to take advantage of food availability—Black capped Chickadees don’t find many insects in upstate New York in mid-January—but sudden cold periods here catch groups of birds who are unused to existing on alternate foods. Among passerines, seed and berry eaters like sparrows and waxwings fare generally well—the food supply is not so much affected and seed-based bird feeders are able to supplement naturally occurring foods. Insectivores like kinglets and warblers do less well—sudden cold snaps kill many insects and prolonged cold prevents new hatching. Probers, shorebirds for example, faced with frozen ground, must find areas that thaw during the day. Even freshwater divers must alter their location or their feeding strategy to compensate for frozen ponds and streams.

All this resulted in some interesting sightings and some sad low numbers on Christmas Counts later in the month. Record numbers of Killdeer and Snipe were seen feeding on lawns throughout the Bay area—many of these were assumed to be birds from inland areas that had moved to the more temperate coast. There was even a Semipalmated Plover spotted on a grassy plot in downtown Berkeley one day. Duck numbers were way down at Sacramento NWR at the end of December—the assumption was that partially frozen ponds had driven many ducks to forage in stubbly fields. Coots and small numbers of ducks walked along the ice picking at protruding vegetation. Ruby-crowned Kinglet numbers were way down, surpassed in some places by the numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets. On the Southern Marin count, we didn’t see or hear our first Anna’s Hummingbird until 2 in the afternoon. A Bewick’s Wren worked its way up a large tree probing the bark like a Brown Creeper and Bushtits were very scarce.

* * *

Despite the cold, Christmas Bird Counts generally insure that if there’s anything rare to be found, it will be—it’s hard to elude all those watchful eyes. Coastal counts with boat parties make a pretty thorough survey of all the adjacent seas—Northern Fulmar, Sooty Shearwater, Short-tailed Shearwater (just one, on the Año Nuevo count (Bs fide RSTh)); Black-vented Shearwater, Pomerine and Parasitic Jaeger, Black-legged Kittiwake, Ancient and Marbled Murrelet, Cassin’s and Rhinoceros Auklet were all seen. The highlight would probably be a single Arctic Tern, that super-long-distance migrant that should be somewhere in southern South America now, spotted instead in Southern Marin on the 29th (ASH). Also of interest were the twenty-four Mottled Petrels reported by a research

vessel 60 miles off Humboldt Bay on the 11th (SNGH fide KH).

The Sebastopol Wood Stork was last reported on the 21st (PRa). On the 29th, a Wood Stork was sighted from the Estero Trailhead at Pt. Reyes—it was being harrassed by ravens and flew off to the south (RoA). Five Trumpeter Swans, an adult and four immatures, found late in the month at Aracata Bottoms, still remained on 1/2 (GSL). An Emperor Goose was reported from Colusa NWR on the 8th (MJL). The Garganey at the Bolinas Sewer Ponds was refound in one of the lower ponds on the 31st after an absence of over a month (DaS fide KH). There were numerous sightings of Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Barrow's Goldeneye, Oldsquaw and Hooded Merganser—birds regularly present here in winter in small numbers. There'll be a recap later in the season. Tufted Ducks were reported from Bouldin Island in San Joaquin county on the 15th (MJL fide DGY) and Mallard Reservoir in Concord on 1/1 (KGH). Two Harlequin Ducks remained at Año Nuevo Point thru the 29th (fide RSTh); another, a male, was found at Princeton Harbor on the 25th (SEM, BHa). Several Bald Eagles were seen along the coast from the Russian River to Santa Cruz from mid to late month. Rough-legged Hawks seem to be around in quite small numbers this year. A couple of Broad-winged Hawk sightings were a real Christmas treat—one in Bolinas on the 14th (KH) and another in Inverness from the 15th to the 18th (RS fide DWm).

Up to two Rock Sandpipers were seen at Princeton Harbor thru the month (MiF, WT, RAR, DFa); another was reported from Bodega Head on the 2nd (GJ), the first sighting at this formerly regular location in several years. On the 2nd, a hunter in Colusa county shot into a flock of snipe killing

what proved to be a Jack Snipe (fide KH), a small Palearctic breeder that winters in central Africa and southern Asia, an interesting find (it's only the 2nd record for western North America south of Alaska) but a bit of a blot for the hunting community. There were a total of seven Glaucous Gulls reported during the period.

A Costa's Hummingbird was seen in Stockton on the 15th (DGY); and a *selasphorus* hummingbird was present at Sutro Baths in SF from the 20th to the 27th (ASH, RS). Lewis' Woodpeckers were reported from Santa Cruz county on the 17th and 18th (Elb). The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continued to be seen at Pine Gulch Creek in Bolinas thru the 15th (THK); another, believed to be the same bird found last year, returned to Nicasio on the 15th (THK, AWa, SGI); and a third was reported from GG Park on the 4th (GJ). The Rednaped Sapsucker remained in Inverness (fide DWm) and another was seen in Albany on the 16th (LL, CL). An unseasonable Least Flycatcher put in an appearance in GG Park from the 17th to the 20th (mob); a Dusky-capped Flycatcher remained in Santa Cruz county from the 1st to the 4th (SA, DLSu); and a Tropical Kingbird put in a brief appearance in Stockton on the 15th (DGY). The Wagtail, now thought to be a White, but still the topic of much erudite discussion, remained at Moss Landing thru 1/2 (SNGH, DaS, SW). A Gray Catbird, generally a skulker, hopped around like a towhee on the tops of bushes and posts at Pajaro Dunes on 1/1 and 2 (PJM, LCo). The Bendire's Thrasher remained in Lodi (mob); and a single Bohemian Waxwing, extremely rare anywhere along the coast this far south, was seen in Santa Cruz on the 15th (fide BBrr). Despite the extreme cold, there is quite an amazing list of warblers for the month, many, but not all, of which can be credited to the

vigilance of Christmas counts. On the other hand, several long-running regulars disappeared during the cold before they could ever be counted.

WARBLERS

TENNESSEE WARBLER

1 Santa Cruz	12/15-18	fide BBrr, ELb
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ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER

1 Bolinas	12/22	RAR
6 Lake Merced	12/24	TCo

NASHVILLE WARBLER

1 Olema	12/15	RS fide KH
2 Crystal Spgs.	12/22	RS

LUCY'S WARBLER

1 Pacific Grove	12/27	fide BBrr
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YELLOW WARBLER

4 Lake Merced	11/25-12/2	PJM
1 Hayward	12/16	fide PEG

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

1 San Francisco	11/25-12:10	mob
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BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER

2 Santa Cruz	12/1	SA
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BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

1 Crescent City	12/15-16	ADB fide GSL
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PRAIRIE WARBLER

1 Half Moon Bay	12/22	RS
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PALM WARBLER

1 Alameda	11/30- 12/15	KTa, AWa, LJF
1 Half Moon Bay	12/9	RSTH
1 Santa Cruz	12/15-17	fide BBrr, Elb
2 Lake Merced	12/27	PJM

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

1 Pescadero	10/17-12/29	RSTh
1 Santa Cruz	12/15	fide BBrr
1 San Bruno	12/22	fide PJM
1 Pacifica	12/27	BS
1 Stinson Beach	12/29	RS

AMERICAN REDSTART

1 GG Park	10/15-12/23	mob
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NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH

1 Bodega Bay	12/5-12/27	mob
1 San Jose	12/23-24	DKe, PLN fide DKe

MAC GILLIVRAY'S WARBLER

1 GG Park	11/21-11/29	mob
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Summer Tanagers were in Inverness on the 16th to 18th (RS) and Bolinas on the 29th to 31st (KH, STe); Western

Tanagers in GG Park on the 12th (ASH) and Hayward on the 16th (fide PEG). Clay-colored, Sharp-tailed, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows were seen in moderate to good numbers throughout the month. Pine Gulch Creek produced a Brewer's Sparrow on the 15th (AWa, THK), an unexpected find near the coast. A Harris' Sparrow in Bolinas was encouraged by regular feeding to stay through the Christmas count (KH, THK, STe). There was a Northern (Bullock's) Oriole in Bolinas on the 29th (RMS). Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks were present in moderate numbers early in the month, but were mostly gone by the end.

Saving the best for last, a Brambling was discovered in Santa Cruz on the 15th and remained thru 1/2. Only the fourth record for N. Calif., it is further south than previous records and is, from all descriptions, an extremely handsome bird, well worth pursuing even though it seems to disappear for hours at a time. A nice Christmas present for everyone.

OBSERVERS—Roger Alexander, Steve Allison, Bruce Barrett, Alan D. Barron, Terry Colburn, Luke Cole, Dale Falaker, Leora R. Feeney, Mike Feighner, Steve Glover, Philip E. Gordon, Keith Hansen, Bob Hargas, Kevin G. Hints, Alan S. Hopkins, Steven N. G. Howell, Greg Jackson, Dan Keller, Theodore H. Koundakjian, Earl Lebow, Gary S. Lester, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Michael J. Lippsmeyer, many observers, Peter J. Metropulos, Steve E. Miller, Paul L. Noble, Peter Radcliff, Ruth A. Rudesill, Barry Sauppe, David Sibley, Rich Stallcup, Robert M. Stewart, David L. Suddjian, Ken Taylor, Scott Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Walter Tordoff, Adrian Wander, Sophie Webb, David Wimpfheimer, David G. Yee.

—ANN DEWART

PEACE NAVY, AHOY!

This year the BayKeeper sent the Peace Navy to help Golden Gate Audubon count the birds in the southern aquatic sector of our Oakland Christmas Bird Count. After last year's (1989) heroic nine hour 'Zodiac' boat ride from the Berkeley Marina down to the southern end of the Oakland Airport and back to Berkeley, this birdwatching team was ready for a new approach to birding on the Bay. BayKeeper, a San Francisco based conservation organization, rose to the occasion. BayKeeper voluntarily patrols San Francisco Bay and Estuary, looking for polluters, and those who would otherwise desecrate the Bay.

They sent Skipper Bob Heifetz and their trusty craft *BayKeeper* to meet our birding team at the Berkeley Marina and take them off for the day. As other teams know, it was a lovely day, and conditions were excellent for birding, especially on the Bay, where it wasn't too rough to do accurate counting. Bob had never skipped for birders before, and he did a terrific job. He learned a little about the birds he encounters on the Bay, where he works as a free-lance charter boat captain, and we learned something interesting from him.

Besides being a volunteer with the BayKeeper, Skipper Heifetz is a leader in the Peace Navy. The Peace Navy is a group that coalesced through volunteers working with the American Friends Service Committee back in 1983 or so. They non-violently demonstrate for peace causes from their boats, which are often colorfully festooned with banners and sails.

Our group would like to give special thanks to Michael Herz who is the BayKeeper, as well as that organization's Executive Director. And thanks to our Skipper, Bob Heifetz, who

volunteered to spend his whole day helping us record all the birds we could find out on the Bay on that lovely December day. Thanks again, and I hope that perhaps we'll see you all again next year.

BRUCE WALKER

GGAS AND THE FARALLONES

The Problem:

The Farallon Islands support the largest continental seabird breeding colony south of Alaska. The Islands support 12 nesting seabird species. They also support 5 pinneped species including the Stellar (or nothern) sea lion which was recently listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. GGAS has long known how special a place the Farallones are and we have led boat trips to the Islands for many, many years. Its been one of our most popular trips.

But hard times have come to the Farallones. In the mid-1800's the Islands supported a breeding population of approximately 400,000 common murres. Egg hunting and other human depredations led to a dramatic decline in these numbers and by the mid-1900's there were only a few thousand murres left.

Between 1950 and the 1970's, with the cessation of egg hunting, and the reduction in oil spills and human occupation of the islands, the murre population rebounded and in 1982 their numbers increased to about 102,000 on the South Islands.

Gill netting proved to be their next challenge and was responsible for the death of 70,000 murres between 1979 and 1987. By 1986 South Islands murre numbers had dropped to about 55,570 and on the North Islands to 22,900.

Because murre do not breed until they are 4 to 6 years old these losses had long term impacts and the South Islands murre population continued to decline through 1989 until there were only 40,860 left. This is only 10% of their historic numbers.

Gill netting, however, has been eliminated for nearly three years and murre populations are not recovering. This is a very disturbing trend. In the past, when damaging impacts (eg. egg stealing) were removed the bird population rebounded quickly. One likely reason for this lack of rebound is a decline in food supply due to El Nino type events, but it is unlikely that this is the sole reason. After all, this is a food source that once sustained 400,000 birds.

Stellar sea lions have also experienced a similar decline, from 700 in the 1940's to only 200 (110-125 breeding females) in the 1960's to only 50 females in 1989.

A Possible Cause:

Over the last four years, the Islands have witnessed a large increase in human use. Abalone and sea urchin harvesting (diving) activity has increased more than ten-fold from 21 boat-days a year in 1986 to 256 in 1989.

Wildlife disturbances (including bird flushings) increased from only 1 observed in 1986 and 1987 to 5 in 1988, 12 in 1989 and 13 in only the first four months of 1990. Seventy-seven percent of the 1989 disturbances were caused by the fisheries' activities.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) which manages the Farallones as a National Wildlife Refuge believes that one of the reasons for the decline in Stellar sea lion populations is the increased presence of these fisheries. The sea lions have moved from more protected haul out areas to less protected ones as divers have invaded those more protected sites.

The Service is also very concerned over drastic increases in bird flushings. Murres nest on bare rock, and if flushed during their breeding season, chicks and/or eggs may be crushed or dislodged. Other chicks and/or eggs will be more susceptible to predation (the Islands host the largest colony of western gulls in the world and gulls do prey on murre eggs and chicks).

Because murre often flush thousands at a time, a single murre flushing event during the breeding season could have devastating impacts on an already reduced population, a population that is not recovering from past losses.

A Solution

With a murre population at only 10% of its historic numbers *and not increasing*, and with a drastically declining endangered species population (Stellar sea lion) one must attempt to eliminate all possible impacts to these species and hope for a recovery.

Realizing this, and with data indicating a direct correlation between increased sea urchin and abalone boat usage of the Islands and Stellar sea lion habitat displacement, the Service recommended a total 1000 foot closure around the South Island to all boats, except for those mooring or anchored at East Landing.

This is why you are reading this article. This prohibition would also effect all tour boats and, as mentioned previously, GGAS has sponsored boat trips to the Farallones for many years.

Our boat trip would be affected by this prohibition. We would not be able to approach South Island closer than 1,000 feet except at the East Landing mooring. East Landing is the site where our trips usually stop but first we could no longer go along a stretch of the Islands where many murre nest.

Why are tour boats being included in the ban? There are several reasons. One is that the birds seem to be getting more

skittish. In April, 1990 a single sailboat passing the Island caused 2,000 murrelets to flush. Another reason is that in 1989 one of the documented wildlife disturbances was caused by a tour boat starting its engine.

The Service believes that with so clearly a distressed wildlife population, with documented disturbances resulting from *all* types of craft, the prohibition must be a general one.

There is, of course, a great deal of controversy over this issue. Tour boat operators who, justifiably, believe that their tours are providing important educational opportunities to the public (and helping to create a constituency that will support wildlife protection) are asking that they be exempted from the prohibition. Several of our members have also taken this position.

The Service (and the California Department of Fish and Game, which has the actual regulatory authority over the waters around the Farallones) have been holding negotiations with all interested parties.

Some compromise will probably be reached that will allow a little more access, but probably not much more. The Service is taking its stewardship responsibilities to heart and I, for one, am overjoyed to see the Service regaining its sense of mission (the preservation of our natural resources) after eight years of Reagan anti-environmentalism.

The GGAS Board of Directors, after several meetings has reached a position on this issue. We have decided that we do support the Service's position. We hope, and request of the Service, that reasonable approaches by tour boats be allowed. But if the Service believes that such approaches will detrimentally affect the wildlife on the Farallones, we will strongly support all necessary prohibitions.

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

News from NAS

A GOOD YEAR, ON BALANCE

To many of us, impatient to change the world for the better, the progress of environmental legislation through Congress can seem excruciatingly slow. The payoff comes, after years of painstaking negotiations and sleepless nights, when a bill is finally passed and signed by the President.

Such is the case with the Clean Air Act: it took 13 years, but in late October, Congress at last approved a bill to reauthorize and strengthen this vital law. President Bush deserves credit for putting forth a proposal last year that helped put the legislation on course.

Besides the Clean Air Act, we got a new solid farm bill, with major improvements in wetlands protection and record keeping. Regrettably, the law does not stop the export of US-banned chemicals and the import of foods treated with them, but Vermont Senator Patrick/Leahy plans to take up the issue.

We applaud Congress' good sense in passing tough new oil spill liability legislation making companies like Exxon fully accountable for their actions. The President also signed a bill to limit export of raw logs from Oregon and Washington national and state forests, reducing one cause of accelerated logging of giant trees.

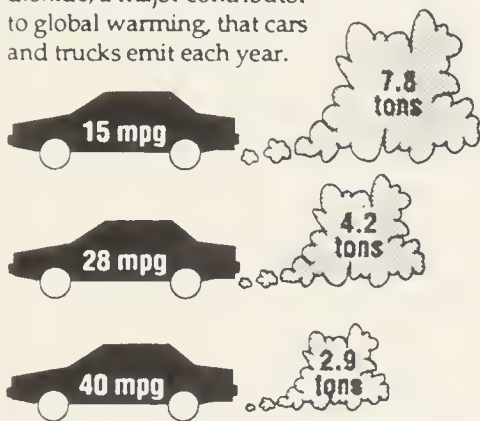
We even—thanks in large part to our hard-working activists—put out some serious fires. Pressure from several senior senators, responding to outraged Auduboners and others, forced Alaska Senator Frank Murkowski to back down on his efforts to open the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. And Congress withstood an attempt by Oregon Senator Bob Packwood to cripple the Endangered Species Act.

So it's time to slap ourselves on the back, take a deep breath of fresher air—and to gird ourselves for the challenges ahead. It won't be easy. But that's why we're in this in the first place.

—PETER A. A. BERLE
President, NAS

Gas Mileage and Air Pollution

Improving motor vehicle gas mileage standards can lower the amount of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming, that cars and trucks emit each year.



Source: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
All figures are for yearly emissions
© Safe Energy Communication Council

BACK YARD BIRDER

Hmmm? A pile of bird droppings on the walkway next to the house? I look up to see a perfect perch under the eaves. From the looks of it, a bird must have decided this was its night-time perch. After dark I took a flashlight, curious to discover my new boarder. The titmouse never budged as I peeked at it. It never occurred to me to chase it away. But, a neighbor (a very tidy one) recently asked me how to discourage such a bird. I suppose one would merely need to make the perch

uncomfortable by making a bed of nails or tacking on sheet metal to make the perch slippery.

As a rule, birds tend to roost for the night in habitat similar to their daytime haunts. Water birds sleep sitting or standing on their native element or on predator-free islands. Ground dwellers such as quail sleep on the ground, clustering together in a circle with their heads pointed outward so they can make a quick escape, each in a different direction. Cavity-nesters tend to nod off in their tree holes or in nesting boxes. Woodpeckers and Brown Creepers sleep clinging to a vertical surface, using their stiff tails as braces. Living up to its reputation as the premier aerial bird of all, the Common Swift of Eurasia sleeps on the wing! Even birds which are not arboreal, such as herons and pheasant, seek the protection of dense shrubbery or trees where a marauding carnivore's movements will be detected in plenty of time to escape.

Birds which are communal in their nesting habits (herons, gulls, terns) or feeding habits (starlings, blackbirds, shore birds) or both (crows) often sleep in flocks, some of them gigantic in size. The chief benefit is one of defense; in addition, they derive much warmth from each other. Wrentit families have been observed roosting with their wings spread about one another.

There is a misconception that birds sleep with their heads under one wing. The most common sleeping posture is with the head turned toward the back, resting on the back with the bill tucked under the shoulder feathers. Ducks are a perfect example, sleeping in this position on land or water. Grebes, storks and doves *never* sleep this way but rest their retracted heads on hunched shoulders with the bill pointed forward.

Whether on the ground or grasping

a branch, almost all birds squat down over their legs and feet, feathers fluffed up to retain maximum body heat. Some birds stand on one leg while the other is tucked up into its plumage. Periodically they shift, flex and then alternate legs.

Birds not only sleep deeply at times but can nap with eyes open. The sleeping rhythms of birds generally correlate with their feeding habits and these "schedules" change according to environmental factors, e.g. many water birds feed and roost with the tides. Song birds which actively feed during daylight, sleep rather soundly and without interruption at night. Owls and other nocturnal species follow the opposite rhythm. Insect-eating birds often "sleep in" until the air temperature warms and activates their favorite food. And birds such as vultures and hawks need thermals to soar over their hunting grounds, so they leave their roosts later and return to them earlier than most birds.

I won't be evicting any of my little free-loading boarders. Unlike some guests, they don't stay until they've out worn their welcome!

—MEG PAULETICH

SEABIRDS OF HAWAII

Seabirds of Hawaii: Natural History and Conservation, by Craig S. Harrison, Cornell University Press, Ithica, N.Y., 1990. Paper \$15.95, cloth \$36.90, 288pp., 41 color photos, 8 maps.

Seabirds of Hawaii provides an interesting and readable account of a complex and poorly-known subject—a tropical seabird community. The book comprises four parts. The first two, *The Environment and Humans* and *Comparative Biology of Hawaiian Seabirds*, set the scene, while the last two, *Hawaiian Seabirds; Family Groups and Species* and *Conservation* constitute the

meat of the book. Harrison provides the reader with a wealth of information about Hawaii's seabirds—on land and at sea. Breeding biology and feeding ecology are often colorfully described from first-hand experiences, and human-related problems such as resource competition and pollution are well treated.

The author's emphasis on Hawaii's seabirds as a community, and their interactions with one another and with the environment (not least the commercial interests of humans), reveals a broad understanding and knowledge of his subject. Because of this community and family-level approach, however, locating information about a single species requires considerable work, a process by which one finds extensive repetition of facts; e.g. much of the information in Part 2, in chapters 6 (Breeding Ecology) and 7 (Feeding Ecology) is repeated in Part 3 under various family accounts. Also, a not uncommon lack of continuity between sentences and paragraphs supports my view that the book could have been better organized; but it is always much easier to criticize than to do, and Harrison should be commended for a good job.

The book seemingly is not directed at a scientific audience, as evidenced by, among other things, the often annoying lack of direct references and of capitalized bird-species' names. At the same time, much of the information is perhaps relatively specialized for the general reader. Faults which may lie as much with the editor include the frequently poor grammar; e.g. witness on p. 75 "birds are colonized", the (ab)use of colony as a verb . . . , the not infrequent typos, and the fact that the maps of the main islands (pp. 11–13) lack scale, orientation, or labels of the contour symbols. Something was lost by

not one reference (at least that I found) to the attractive color photos (which portray most of the archipelago's seabirds) and thus serve no more than a decorative function. The book overall, however, is well-produced.

One point with which I had a little difficulty was that of the author repeatedly casting a territorial Wedge-tailed Shearwater off a cliff in an attempt to banish it from wailing in his ear (pp. 120-121). But a single incident should not mar what is one of the book's main values—its treatment of conservation. Here the author speaks from strength as he outlines the relevant laws, state and federal, and whether these laws are effective. While the provisions of the laws are quite sound, however, the executors of the laws, and all-too-often, the resources needed, may be lacking. Hawaiian politics are portrayed, perhaps more truthfully than some might like, as reminiscent of the Third World: an often inbred and corrupt system where profit comes first, key positions are often held by unqualified personnel, and bureaucracy effectively hinders scientists and conservationists. A ray of hope is provided, as in many parts of the world, by private organizations such as the Nature Conservancy. Harrison's criticisms of the political climate of Hawaii, however, are well-tempered with constructive suggestions and provide a harsh but fair overview of the subject and its problems.

Overall I recommend *Seabirds of Hawaii* as a fascinating account of a tropical seabird community and as a realistic evaluation of a conservation challenge faced not only in Hawaii.

—STEVE N. G. HOWELL

TIME TO STOP

Do you know that there are more than 40 million caged birds in the United States? Most of these birds—parakeets, canaries, zebra finches, and cockateils—are bred in captivity. But eight million birds, including most parrot species, are trapped in the wild as adults or nestlings.

The United States is the largest market for imported birds. At least one million birds are imported each year, and thousands die before they ever reach stores. On the average, a bird has no better than a 50-50 chance of surviving capture, transport and sale.

As a result of the dramatic threat posed to many species by the pet trade, Audubon staff are involved in a joint effort with the pet industry, bird breeders, zoos and animal-welfare and conservation groups to solve this urgent problem. The joint effort is known as the Cooperative Working Group on Bird Trade.

The group is lobbying for national legislation to ban the trade in wild-caught birds for pets and is seeking its introduction in Congress in the spring of 1991. You can help make a difference by buying only captive-bred birds for pets and encouraging retailers not to sell birds caught in the wild.

If you would like to be involved with wildlife trade issues you may write to Dorene Bolze, Wildlife Trade Program, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

THE "FOSSIL"

The water level at San Francisco's Lake Merced has been dropping consistently for over four years. Drought and aquifer depletion from new wells certainly contributed to the situation. However, the birding has been great, so I took an early winter walk at the lake's south end.

The midday light filtered through the haze, reducing visibility of distant birds. I watched the grebes, ducks and gulls from the bridge, photographed a Sora as it darted from the bulrushes to dabble with a flock of House Sparrows, then I headed for the mud flats at the lake's south end. Beneath my Nikes the black ground quaked, and I remembered the bogs I so enjoyed in Saskatchewan. Each step caused a tremor. Now and then I trod too heavily and my foot sank through the thin crust. A Lincoln's Sparrow darted from the tall grass next to me. It was about then I noticed the brown feathery mass at the water's edge where sandpipers walk but ducks must swim. Its feathers fluttered in the warm breeze. When I neared enough to see the bird well I noticed the blaze of white at the tail's base. Here then was not the duck I expected, but a Northern Harrier, only one of about half a dozen I have ever seen in the City. I inspected the still form from several angles, walked into the wet mud nearer the dead hawk, and found a very live eye alert to my approach.

The harrier was in the grip of the black, viscous mud. Exhausted beyond moving at my approach, it was much too far from solid ground for even a thought of an immediate rescue. Now the bird looked like some fossil in a museum display. The imprint of its wings and tail already marked the mud. Its lower body was already deep within

the silty tomb. It's still form simply awaited a sort of immortality.

After a few phone calls, a bite to eat, and a change of clothes, I was back at the lake. Within a few minutes Curt Charles from the San Francisco Animal Care and Control Department found me and we headed for the bird. From the road above it looked like a simple rescue. The mud seemed solid enough, and I doubted my earlier trepidation. But back at the lake's shore the bird remained about 20 feet beyond our most daring reach. Alan Fish from the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory arrived as did two others from Animal Control. Together we spent about a half an hour suggesting idea after idea, testing the mud, but each time realizing the folly of our situation. With boots we managed to get somewhat closer, but each step sank deeper into the mud, and brought nearer the possibility of our own entrapment. Alan and two of the others left to try to get a boat or other rescue equipment while Kurt and I remained behind.

Stymied, we seemed doomed to await the return of the others. Then I thought of the real estate sign which someone had thrown into the weeds by the road. We had thought of using a plank or ladder to reach the bird, but it would certainly have sunk in the mud. But a broad board might just do it. I never thought about it before, but my waders made it fairly easy to walk through the briar patch to where the sign lay. When I got it to the mud flat, we tore it in half and began to head toward the mud. Curt placed one half down, stood on it, put the other a step further in the mud, then retrieved the one behind him and repeated the process. Our little moving walk way did well until Curt was just a few feet short of the noticeably more active harrier. His final step brought

Curt to about 3 feet from the bird, but the boards were both 2 to 3 feet in the mud, and couldn't be lifted out. We knew now we could get the bird, but just to be safe I returned to the roadside to get more wood. The roof from a discarded dog house proved all we needed. I pried its two halves apart and tossed them in the mud. By then Curt had skillfully wrapped the harrier in a towel and placed her safely in a box. He stepped gingerly back to solid ground.

Curt radioed the others and soon we all regaled on the harrier's rescue. Alan took the immature female bird back to

Marin where it recovered and was released a week later.

The real estate sign remains buried in the mud, perhaps to fossilize. The other wood we were able to remove to higher ground. Later I talked with Alan and we agreed his decision to release the harrier at the Marin Headlands was a wise one. All this bird seemed to need was a chance to get stuck in the mud again. Together we wondered if a foot or more beneath the mud at the south end of Lake Merced is the body of a Killdeer or Least Sandpiper embarking on the first stages of a trip to fossilized immortality.

—DAN MURPHY

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH
VOLUNTEER FOR ACR

The Bolinas Lagoon Preserve’s public season will begin on March 16 and continue until July 14. Though that is still several weeks in the future, now might be the time to plan your weekend as an ACR host. As always, each of the sponsoring Audubon Chapters will be responsible for providing hosts. However, many of our friends find themselves unable to give of their time during the period their chapters are providing hosts. If you are unable to host when asked to, or if nobody asks you, you can still volunteer to help us. Just call the Ranch at (415) 868-9244. Nancy Angelesco will be happy to place you on our schedule.

WINTER NOTES and WALKS

December’s arctic weather didn’t go unnoticed at our preserves. Edris Cole reported that marshes at both ends of Bolinas Lagoon froze as did the lagoon’s edge. Killdeer were forced to higher ground in the Ranch yard and parking lot. Nearby, many Townsend’s Warblers were reported to have died as a result of the freeze. Everybody’s favorite water fountain, the trough shaped one by the ranch house, froze. The pipes burst and the staff was treated to a spectacular ice

sculpture. The fountain should be fixed by spring when we’ll be at the ranch and in need of a drink of water.

Meanwhile at the Bouverie Preserve pipes and hummingbird feeders froze in the all time low temperature of 12 degrees. They day before the freeze staff planted a plot of native bunch grasses. They seem to have survived the freeze as did the oaks planted by local school children two years ago. As with other gardeners, Ranch biologist John Petersen found himself caught between the need to water newly planted and drought stricken vegetation, and fear that the water would freeze on the ground and kill the plants. As of this writing BAP’s plants were dry, cold and alive.

Speaking of BAP, this is about your last chance to register for our winter nature walks there. GUIDED NATURE WALKS at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve will take place on Saturdays, February 16, March 9 and 23 (9:30 am to 1:30 pm). The February walk should be just right for seeing red-bellied newts. If you want to see those early spring wildflowers for which the Bouverie Preserve is so well known, sign up for one of the March walks. These outings are free, but require reservations. You



may register as early as the first of the month preceding the walk, or as late as the Wednesday just prior to the walk. Just call us at (707) 938-4554.

NEW DOCENTS

Congratulations to the members of our two graduating docent classes. The Bouverie Preserve will have 33 new docents to work with visiting school children and the general public. The Bolinas Lagoon Preserve's class of 26 will work only with school children. Welcome to these new members of the ACR family.

THANKS TO GENEROUS DONORS

We wish to thank ACR docent Ellie Ritter for her generous gift of a charitable remainder trust. Thanks as well to the Frank Campini Foundation for a very generous gift from the Else Dillon Trust. Both gifts will benefit the ACR Endowment and will go far toward realizing the goal of our endowment drive and continuing the work of ACR. If you missed our recent seminars regarding planned giving, but wish to receive information about ways you can help ACR, please call the office at (415) 868-9244.

—DAN MURPHY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Feb. 14 Berkeley
Bugs from the Near and Far Side by Ray Peterson
- Mar. 14 San Francisco
Marine Mammals and Birds of Baja and the Sea of Cortez by Bill Keener
- Apr. 11 Berkeley
Bird Life of the Marin Islands by Philip Green and Terry Nevins
- May 9 Berkeley
Los Barbudal: Tropical Dry Forest Park in Costa Rica by Dr. Gordon Frankie

All GGAS programs begin at 7:30 p.m. Berkeley programs are at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda. San Francisco programs are at the Josephine Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way.





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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to
join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership
renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues
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Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.